

Intercontinental Academia

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Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your announcement of the first UBIAS Intercontinental Academia Workshop greatly attracted my attention. The format of research, on the topic "time," initiated by you within the framework of the Intercontinental Academia, strikes me as an especially innovative research concept.

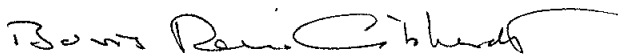
I would be glad to participate within this network structure in the context of my current research project about "time". In my opinion, the issue of time as an experience between "biological rhythm and social schedules of time," at the focus of your announcement, also has an aesthetic dimension: Temporal experience occurs in specific aesthetic form in images; this 'image-time' or 'viewer-time' is omnipresent in everyday life as well as in the experience of art. A theory of images and media oriented not just spatially as hitherto, but also temporally, can best explore this temporal dimension. Thus I see my possible contribution to yours in an inquiry into the aesthetic experience of time in viewing pictures under the premises of sensory physiology, history and fine art. My research project about the temporality of images is affiliated to the Faculty of History at the University of Bielefeld since February 2014. It is a part of the German research network 'Ästhetische Eigenzeiten. Zeit und Darstellung in der polychronen Moderne' ('aesthetic dimensions of individual time in polychromic modernity'), a current interdisciplinary priority research programme ('Schwerpunktprogramm') promoted by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

In my research work I focus on interdisciplinary questions, especially in the field of intermediality, image-text-relations and comparison of the arts. Since my dissertation about the poetics of ornament in modern novel (PhD at the Freie Universität Berlin in

Comparative Literature/History of Art), published in 2011, and various research projects about art and culture around 1800 at the German Institute for the History of Art in Paris and other research institutions from 2009 to 2013, the topic of time occupies an important position in my work, in various respects. Therefore and in addition to the following project proposal about romantic allegories of temporality, I attach a current article about ornamental figures of time in modern novel (Marcel Proust) as well as an encyclopedia article about the motives 'time' and 'chronos' in revolutionary iconography around 1789. I also add an new article for the international art historical CIHA-publication about Benjamin's term of "aura" and the arts around 1800 as an example of my broader research interest in the interdisciplinary field between aesthetics and history of the arts.

I would be pleased if my project and my research experience interested you. It would be a great pleasure for me to contribute to your new UBIAS research network for sharing knowledge on time in an interdisciplinary exchange and to develop further research topics about "time" in the context of the Intercontinental Academia workshops in São Paulo and Nagoya among colleagues and distinguished authorities. I shall be happy to answer any questions you might have.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boris Rhein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Picture – Perception – Time. The Temporality of Images

The project will examine how *temporal* aspects of the reception aesthetics of pictures were reflected and used in the history of art, especially in German Romanticism around 1800. Taking recourse to the results of this historical point of view on Romantic Time, the project will contribute to develop the conceptual and analytical framework of a new general reception aesthetics of the picture which focuses on the temporality of the act of viewing.

1. Reception aesthetics and its temporality

In a particular manner, pictures and images (in a broader sense) are involved in different layers of time: the represented time, the aging and deterioration of the image carrier, processes of perception as well as the memories and expectations of the viewer. Thus, the perception of pictures cannot be understood as the simultaneous view of a given visual entity, rather it takes places within the framework of its own temporality when the eye of the beholder follows predetermined traces or establishes new ways of exploring the depiction. Each act of perceiving pictures implies processes by which different elements of the given depiction are related to each other (Boehm 2007; Damisch 2011).

Receptions aesthetics (Rezeptionsästhetik), initialized especially in the studies of Literature (Strasen 2008; Ingarden 1965; Iser 1984) and then applied to the history of art (Kemp 1992; Kemp 2011), is of crucial importance in order to better understand the temporal experiences in front of pictures. By their formal and figurative qualities pictures make certain processes of perception possible or impose restrictions. However, the extent and means by which pictures influence the complex temporality of their perception are hardly investigated.

Previous attempts to describe unequivocal eye movement patterns remain highly disputed. Therefore, this project does not primarily try to reconstruct such stable patterns but analyses conflicts and contradictions within pictures and examines how these tensions provoke a temporal extension of the perception. By critically reviewing previous research on the relationship between image and time (Dittmann 1980; Dittmann 2003; Careri 2009; Hülsen-Esch 2003; Pochat 2004; Kuzniar 1998; Theissing 1987) as well as empirical approaches and cognitive science (Betz 2010; Elkins 1995;

Locher 2011; Rosenberg 2011), this project tries to further develop the art historical reception aesthetics and to point out its hitherto neglected temporal aspects.

For this purpose, systematic and historical perspectives are to be interconnected. The historical part of the project will show how temporal aspects of the reception aesthetics of pictures were reflected in German romanticism. Around 1800 there is an ideal of 'vivid' or 'living' representation whose primary interest is to invest the means of representation with vitality and mobility of visual or written signs (Menninghaus 1991; Oschmann 2007). At the center are pictorial allegories at the beginning of the 19th century, because they often are also figural representations of their own influence on our (temporal) perception and reception of the artwork. Thus, the project aims at showing that the active 'power' of pictures (that has been much discussed; Freedberg 1989; Didi-Huberman 1999; Bredekamp 2010) is not restricted to deceptive illusionism or to the rhetoric of evidence, but depends particularly on the specific temporality of the image.

2. Temporal Dynamics of Pictorial Representation around 1800: Romantic Allegory

Art and art theory of German romanticism manifests a particularly high potential for allegory (Grewe 2009; Thimann 2005; Scholl 2007; Busch 1985). Philosophers and writers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck and Novalis, as well as fine artists such as Philipp Otto Runge and Caspar David Friedrich are connected to this rhetorical tradition in that they draw allegory away from classical symbolism toward their own ends. Whereas the classical symbol indicates simultaneity between the signs, an allegory, from ancient rhetoric to modern poetics, has its own characteristic temporal structure that also affects the reception process (Menke/Haverkamp 2000, p. 86; Titzmann 1979). By introducing a hiatus between literal and figurative meaning, allegory is unquestionably confrontational and, thus, inseparable from the specified reception aesthetics around 1800. Allegory raises a conflict that the recipient can only resolve by alternating between competing ways of seeing and layers of meaning. It responds in this way to the ideal of 'vivid' or 'living' representation outlined above. Paul de Man has shown with literary examples that according to this understanding, "time" must count as an "original constitutive category" of allegory (de Man 1993, p. 103).

It is probably historically attributable to the fundamental segregation into temporal and spatial arts, established latest with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laokoon*, that no comparable developments have been described until now for the fine arts from the late eighteenth century up to around 1800. Nevertheless, beyond the priority disputes between the rivaling poetic and visual arts, some traces can be discerned suggesting

interest in a genuine temporality of pictorial means of representation. Among these are the mobility of pictorial signs: Aesthetics has been linked with temporal sensitivity ever since Hogarth's definition of the "line of beauty" (Hogarth/Mylius 1754, p. b3) as a particularly rapid form affecting the viewer, as well as since Hemsterhuis's and Kant's ideal of unmitigated apperception (Hemsterhuis 1792, p. 10-14, Kant 1996, vol. 1, p. 150; Mainberger 2005; Schneider 2000).

This project takes up such traces to investigate how during the romantic era, which tapped this philosophical potential, a novel dynamic interpretation of the 'allegorical' line was forged. The foremost form for this purpose is the romantic arabesque, which was elaborated theoretically by Schlegel (Schlegel/Eichner 1957, Nr. 407), and artistically among others by Runge (Oesterle 2000 and 1984; Busch 1985; Pfothner 1996). With its renunciation of the illusionism of the pictorial account, it can be regarded as a typically romantic allegorical system of reference. The arabesque hints at an awareness of the temporality of the means of figurative representation. Its critics (F. A. Krubsacius, A. Riem), just as its defenders (F. Schlegel, Ph. O. Runge, C. Brentano, J. Görres), have pointed out that the arabesque implicates the perception and power of imagination in not entirely controllable, whimsical processes. In this way it makes possible the experience at a specific time for the reception of an image.

In Runge's *Zeiten* (1807), the arabesque can therefore be employed by means of an intrinsically dynamic form of representation to display allegorically processes of time and motion (changes in the time of day and season, growth). What de Man has called, in another context, a necessary relation between insight and blindness (de Man 1971), thus also applies to figurative allegory: Due justice can only be done to allegory by a reception process extended over time, in which now the reference is focused upon, now the difference between signifier and signified. Disregarding a few instances in Anglo-American research (Kuzniar 1989; Prager 2007), the conception of allegory sketched above has hardly gained entrance in the history of art and the theory of media.

Consequently, the present project, taking the historical example of romantic figurative allegories, seeks answers to the fundamental question of how images suggest a consciousness of their own temporality and mobility. The method chosen is interdisciplinary (Kisser 2011; Mann 1999; Butor 1992) and the philosophical and art historical viewpoints taken also incorporate historical issues of physiology and perception (Crary 1996; Dürbeck, 2001; Busch 2008) as well as critical modern and contemporary positions on the positing of theories on the subject of "time" (Rosa 2005; Marin 2001; Didi-Huberman 2000; de Man 1993; Wittgenstein 1960).

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